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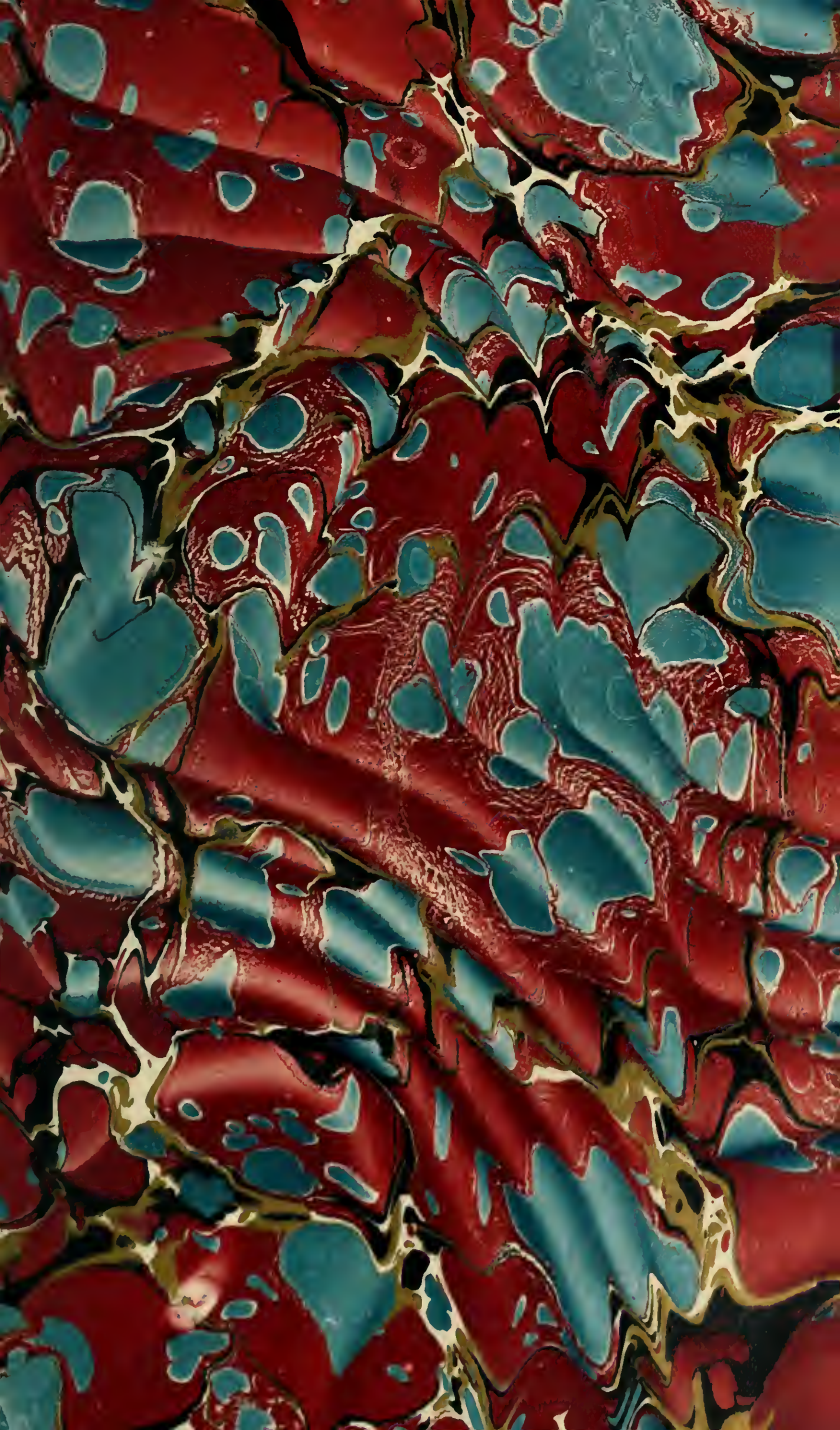

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MANLEY SIMS
ETON COLLECTION

THE

CELEBRATED

# ETON BOY,

AND

# SING-SONG PLAY-HOUSE PIGEON.

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A

## THEATRICAL SQUIB.

Vivat Regina.

AUGUST,

1879.

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# THE ETON BOY.

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Little Charles Kean, an Eton Boy,
His opening talents did employ
In books, and works, and healthful joys,
And the usual life of Eton boys.

Master Charles Kean left Eton School,
Convinced that he was born to rule;
And being left his course to choose,
He put his feet in his Father's shoes.

"The sock and buskin" urged their claim;
He started on the road to fame;
And the first applause that he fairly won,
Was in the part of THE DUTIFUL SON.

For twenty years of study and strife,
He toil'd at the work of an Actor's life;
He found the fortune that he sought,
And gained the height for which he fought.

Charles Kean was an Actor of high degree,
When he married the beauteous Ellen Tree;
And he not only knew the way to woo,
And *manage* a Wife, but a Theatre too.

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And so, Charles Kean, The Eton Boy,
Became the Manager of the Roy-
-al Oxford Street Theatre, call'd "PRINCESS's,"
And famed for its beautiful scenes and dresses.

"Our most religious and gracious QUEEN"
Shew'd favour to Mr. and Mrs. Kean,
By every means that became her state;
And little Charles Kean grew very great.

The Wigans and Keeleys came in for their share,
With Harley, Miss Heath, and Carlotta Leclercq;
And the grace of The Court was attributed, partly,
To Wright, and to T. P. Cooke, and Bartley.

There ROYALTY sat, in curtain'd state;
The Noble and Gentle came (early or late),
The general Publick throng'd the Pit,
The Clergy of course in *Stalls* would sit,
(Though looking rather shy and sinister
When seated by a Dissenting Minister)

Where they heard ev'ry word and they watched ev'ry look,
Saw The Actor's best touches, and purchased his Book,
Improv'd the occasion, exciting the fancy
By all that a Clergyman feels that he *can* see,

Observed the Tableaux, with the two-legged Dancers,
The grand Episodes, with the four-legged Prancers,
And with Dukes, Lords, and Ladies, and Members of Parliament,
Saw what Miss Heath, and Carlotta, and Harley meant.

Charles Kean was Director of Windsor Plays,
The sovereign Chief of those Festive days;
And though *his own* SOVEREIGN fail'd not to thank her Chief,
He made his own PUBLICK his best pocket handkerchief,

When he perform'd ONE ACT, that shows,
As a grief to his friends, and a jest to his foes:
"Ah me! that act"—He was ask'd to play
(In honour of her Marriage Day),
When our own PRINCESS was going away;
And he snub'd the good Mitchell, and said him nay.

But the subject is properly brought to a stop
By the timely descent of the "One Act Drop."

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Now, larger and larger the "Eton Boy" grew,
As Manager—Actor—and Editor too;
For he printed such *Notes* to the Plays he revived,
So deep to the Poet's true meaning he dived,
That, by sure degrees, he became nothing less
Than an Archæological A. S. S.

But he long had been going at such a rate,
That he found his expenses far too great;
And very reluctantly now confesses
He ceases to manage "The Royal Princess's."

It may be the *attraction* ceases
Of Shakspere's gorgeous Easter-Pieces,
Or that THE BARD has no more Plays,
To shew to these enlighten'd days
The sort of thing that the Press will praise:

Be that as it may: The tawdry stales,
The tinsel is tarnish'd, the Bude-Light pales,
And the very remarkably bright career
Of "The Royal Princess's" will close this year.

See! now the Season's nearly ended,
The poor Free-List is *quite* suspended,
And every Play-Bill touchingly speaks
Of final arrangements, and "Few Last Weeks."

So, bring the Velvet Curtain down,
In style to fascinate the Town;
And make, by way of Preparation,
A grand Triumphal Demonstration.

A Banquet's the thing,
Charles Kean as the King,
And Mrs. Charles Kean
In the part of the Queen;
Th' attendant Lords by Eton Boys,
Who all were born to make some noise;
And to honour the favorite Eton Boy,
Bring forth a Titled Hobb-e-de-hoy,
Who, having been bred at Eton School,
Will kindly consent the Feast to rule,
To flatter the Actor, and play the fool:
Arrange a Committee of Schoolboy Elves,
And let the Committee commit themselves,
By making the ninnies
Come down with the guineas;
And then, when they calculate how much the *Tin* is,
A grand Presentation
From friends of all station
Shall glorify KEAN in the face of the Nation.

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The Curtain falls.—Again it rises
On one of Mr. Kean's surprises,
As stands the Manager before us,
To speak in character, as "Chorus."

Descend ye Nine—
Descend, and Dine:
Bring actual goblets and real wine;
With delicacies out of season.
That may bespeak "the Feast of Reason;"

And, to promote "the flow of Soul,"
Come on! my true and trusty COLE.
"Open locks,
Whoever knocks?"
Potent is the good Strong box;
*Doubly* potent "BOX and COX!"
In toasts and in speeches, that terrible word,
The name of MACREADY shall never be heard,
Nor in all to be printed hereafter, be seen
The smallest allusion to COURT or to QUEEN,
As having assisted at Shakspere Revivals;
As named with THE PUBLICK or quoted as rivals;
For that would be "robbing My People and me,
And *me*, most especially"—all will agree.

Eton Boys rise! no shirking nor slinking;
"Life *consists* of Eton and drinking:"
Fellow-boys, shout! and Call-boys, call
To the Banquet at St. James's Hall,
That generous Publick, who found me small,
And made me great, and rich, and tall:
JOHN OX will lead—JOHN BULL will follow,
And beat all opposition hollow.

Ye Band of Brothers, Happy Few,
Press-men of the chosen crew
JOY attends both me and you!
Be to the Great Occasion true,
And chronicle for distant times,
In lofty prose and loftier rhymes,
How the Etonian Wine-cup flow'd,
How the Shakspercan Spirit glow'd
At my HISTORIC EPISODE.

'Tis past, "THE SYMPOSIUM"'s over and done,
And the Manager's Ending is fairly begun:
The Chairman said well what he promised to say,
Of "the Popular Boy," as the Guest of the day;
He spoke of the Actor—the Husband—the Friend,
Whose management prospers, and *draws* to its end;
He touch'd on the principal points of his life,
He glanced at the charms of his excellent wife,
And found a good word for the Royal acclaim,
That graced his "Revivals," embellished his fame,
And sped the success that attended his name.
But the "Guest of the day"
Had nothing to say
Of the Lamp that had cheered and illumined his way,
As night after night,
So constant and bright,
It shone with a steady, diffusive ray;
For Mrs. Charles Kean was presiding alone,
With a special "St. James's," and Court of her own,
Where no *other* Majesty came "near the throne."

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Now, God bless THE QUEEN, in her love for the stage,
And all that may fairly illustrate the Page:
The shapes and the scenes that imbody to sight
The treasures of fancy, to gladden the light;
And bless all THE WORDS that THE POET designed,
To strengthen the weak, and enlighten the blind;
And O let them come in the fulness and force
That spring from the Fount, and are fed at the Source:
Unmingled and free be the stream as it flows,
Nor trammell'd by tinsel nor cumber'd with shows.

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